

The 1947 Partition of India: A Paradigm for Pathological Politics in India and Pakistan

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This article seeks to shed light on the role a particular historical event can play in conferring legitimacy to the politics of communal and national animosities and hostilities. The Partition of India in 1947 was, on the one hand, a gory consummation of a long process of mutual demonising and dehumanising by Hindu and Muslim extremists. On the other, in the post-independence era, it became a model of violent conflict resolution invoked and emulated by ethnic and religious extremists and the hawkish establishments of India and Pakistan.

The paper argues that the Partition of India epitomises the politics of identity in its most negative form: when trust and understanding have been undermined and instead fear and insecurity reign supreme, generating angst at various levels of state and society. In the process, a pathological socio-political system comes into being. I try to show how such a system functions within the domestic sphere as well as in India–Pakistan political interaction.

Introduction

The Partition of British India in 1947, which created the two independent states of India and Pakistan, was followed by one of the cruellest and bloodiest migrations and ethnic cleansings in history. The religious fury and violence that it unleashed caused the deaths of some 2 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. An estimated 12–15 million people were forcibly transferred between the two countries. At least 75,000 women were raped.¹ The trauma incurred in the process has been profound. Consequently, relations between the two states, between them and some of their people, and between some of their groups have not normalised even after more than half a century; on the contrary they have consistently worsened with each passing year. Ethnic conflict currently pervades the domestic politics of the two states and the hawks in their defence establishments have been calling the shots for quite some time. The two states have been on the verge of a nuclear war since May 1998, when both demonstrated their ability to explode nuclear devices. Such a war would in all probability seriously jeopardise human existence and civilisation in this region. Currently, South Asia is undoubtedly the most dangerous nuclear flash point in the world.

My contention is that this potential for self-destruction derives from a paradigm for pathologically ethnicised politics that informs the behaviour of the involved actors. In this paper, I try to shed light on the way a pathological socio-political system comes into being. Such a system needs to be distinguished from the normal type of socio-political system

¹ Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Hurst & Company, London, 2000), p. 3.

in which ethnic groups, besides voluntary associations such as class-based or ideology-oriented parties and organised pressure groups, serve as bases for peaceful competition for power over goods and services in society. Even in peaceful situations, ethnic groups maintain their boundaries and both insiders and outsiders are in some sense aware of them. Some degree of tension may also exist between them, but their leaders and spokespersons are usually able to resolve such problems peacefully.² By contrast, pathological politics thrive on the logic of rejection, exclusion, subordination, and the threat or use of force and violence.

The significance of ethnicity as a variable in social analysis is far from satisfactorily theorised, although the current period has seen an unusual flurry in the literature. This study seeks to advance the theoretical frontiers of current understanding of ethnicity in a special, though by no means unusual situation: that in which tension and conflict, involving organised and recurrent violence, have become endemic. The main argument set forth in this study is that, in the formation of a pathological socio-political system, a particular happening or event can sometimes be identified clearly and unambiguously as the determinant pivot. Its force or intensity is of such proportions that it sets in motion processes that in due course begin to liken a paradigm which, in a path-determinant manner, produces and reproduces pathological, ethnicised behaviour patterns. Rational ideas, policies and solutions, which may also be present, are set aside, rendered ineffective or eliminated by force. The pathological paradigm continues to inform and affect politics until such time that it ceases to be efficacious and useful for its practitioners, or it is undermined by a revolutionary new paradigm.

The expression 'pathological politics' is used here to indicate that individuals not only prefer people of their own ethnic stock, culture, religion, language, nationality and so on, but dislike and despise those belonging to other groups. This derives not from some natural propensity, but because a host of negative historical, socio-economic and cultural facts converge to create a hostile milieu in which individuals and groups, embedded in thick social webs and networks, get trapped.³ Very often such situations give birth to the politics of reaction. Here, reaction is used in a double sense: as a mechanical action-reaction relationship as well as an unenlightened mode of thinking and behaving towards one another by two or more ethnic groups or states. It may result from conflicts within state boundaries or as reactions to happenings in another state. Typically minorities—ethnic, religious, sectarian or linguistic—become the main targets of state-tolerated or state-sanctioned discrimination and violence. In terms of relations between two or more hostile states, pathological politics manifests itself in state-sanctioned ultra-nationalism, promotion of terrorism across borders, and bellicose postures.

The typical causes of ethnic tension and conflict are fear and anxiety, real or imaginary, that ethnic groups experience when confronted by an uncertain present and future, and concomitant perceived threats to survival posed by rival groups. During periods when state authority may be waning and the future framework for power sharing cannot be worked out, apprehensive groups become even more suspicious, thereby exacerbating the lack of mutual trust. Consequently, agreements, where they exist, are broken or ignored and violent conflict erupts.⁴ It is impossible to say whether all members of a group automatically feel such anxiety, or whether a band of ethnic activists in that group are particularly prone to such

² Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, 'Introduction' in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Practice* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1975), pp. 1–26.

³ David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, 'Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict', in David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild (eds), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1998), p. 6.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 7–18.

angst and play a pivotal role in expressing it on the group's behalf, or whether 'political entrepreneurs'—ambitious leaders and intellectuals who may not share the zeal of the activist—excel in articulating such feelings.⁵ Suffice it to say that, without effective leadership, neither activists nor ordinary members can convert such fears and anxieties into activities and movements purporting to combat the perceived threats. This means that political entrepreneurs have the advantage of exaggerating and manipulating such fears in the pursuit of their political ambitions. As a pathological situation develops and takes shape, politics can be reduced to sheer gut reactions. The 'enemy' becomes a faceless, indiscriminate lump of individuals, an ethnic mass, a target requiring and justifying punitive pre-emptive action.

It is argued below that the roots of pathological politics in the intra-state and interstate politics of India and Pakistan are to be traced to the bloody division of the British Indian Empire in 1947. On the one hand, Partition was a gory culmination of more than fifty years of mutual suspicion and fear harboured by ethnic ideologues and activists from the three communities of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. In the past, communal tension and conflict occasionally resulted in violent confrontations, but such events remained small-scale and marginal. Mainstream politics remained essentially constitutional and peaceful. Partition supplanted the normal model with an extremist model of conflict resolution. On the other, it became the inevitable backdrop of post-independence politics of India and Pakistan. Thus for more than fifty years now it has served as the implicit or explicit rationale of anti-minority politics in the two countries and has driven them to belligerent interaction many times. In this particular sense, Partition epitomises pathological politics. It has operated as an ideology of menacing majoritarian nationalism. However, despite the overall growth of a pathological socio-political system, the trajectories along which the two states and their societies have travelled in the last 53 years have been quite different. Such difference derives from the attitudes towards Partition of the erstwhile leaderships in the two countries, the national self-definition that the two movements were premised upon, and the constitutional formula adopted by each country upon which to ground its politics. The present enquiry therefore seeks answers to the following questions:

- *How* and *why* has the Partition of India bequeathed a legacy of pathological politics?
- What are the similarities and differences in the profiles of the Indian and Pakistani ethnicised identities and politics, and how do we explain them?

Conflicting Nationalisms and Communal Apprehensions in Colonial India

Under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Indian National Congress (1885) embarked from 1915 onwards upon a protracted freedom movement, combining peaceful civil disobedience and mass action into an effective strategy of resisting colonial rule. Muslims were to be found at all levels in the Congress, but it was predominantly upper-caste Hindus who were its mainstay. Congress leaders and cadres were incarcerated several times. However, the movement remained confined to the limited question of self-rule and later independence. The Gandhian vision of a nation was communitarian-pluralist, comprising the various religious communities of India. The second major leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, empathised with Fabian socialist ideas. His vision of an independent India was that of a modern secular nation-state based on universal citizenship and individual rights, sustained by progressive economic development and expanding modern education under a planned and centrally directed system. Many other leading members of Congress

⁵ Ibid., pp. 18–23.

were sympathisers or members of Hindu cultural movements and nationalist parties. The Congress wanted to keep India united, but for a number of reasons failed to convince the Muslim League that its brand of nationalism would not mean the permanent majoritarian rule of Hindus.⁶

Although the Congress Party was Hindu dominated, the stronghold of Hindu cultural nationalism was the Hindu revivalist movements and parties. In 1921, Balkrishna Shivram Moonje expressed regret that Hindus were divided into watertight compartments with hardly any sense of community between them. On the other hand, the Muslims formed one organic community, religiously well organised and disciplined.⁷ This observation exaggerated Muslim unity, but the caste divisions among Hindus were indeed proverbial. Hindu ethno-nationalist leaders, most of whom came from the upper castes of Brahmins or Kshatriyas, were deeply worried that lower-caste Hindus might convert to Islam or Christianity.

One of the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha movement (founded 1915), Vinayak Damodar Sarvarkar, presented in 1923 the idea of 'Hindutva'. It was an ethno-cultural category purporting to bring Hindus of all castes within a 'communitarian' fold. Non-Hindus had to assimilate into it by accepting Hindu culture and India as their object of prime loyalty. They could, however, retain their religions as personal beliefs.⁸ The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded in 1925 by Keshaw Baliram Hedgewar, adopted semi-military styles of organisation to instil 'martial arts' among Hindus. Both the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS looked upon Muslims as the main threat to Indian unity. His successor Madhav Sadashiv Gowalkar wrote in 1938:

The foreign races in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, ... or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights.⁹

It is interesting to note that the term 'race' was used to denote religious communities; most Hindus and Muslims are otherwise of the same mixed ethnic stock. In volume 1 of his four-volume study, *History of Partition of India*, the Pakistani historian K.K. Aziz argues that the Hindu revivalists in Punjab had in the 1920s already suggested the partitioning of India on religious lines.¹⁰ It is, however, important to point out that before the Partition of India, right-wing Hindu ethno-nationalism remained a marginal tendency.

The sizeable Muslim minority of India related to the question of Indian nationalism from a position of disadvantage. It was not only smaller in numbers as compared with the Hindus, but also economically and educationally less advanced. The Muslim League founded in 1906, largely in reaction to the growing power of the Congress, remained a moderate communal party of the modern, educated gentry until 1936. It confined its activities to ensuring Muslim representation in the various consultative and legislative bodies through separate electorates (granted in 1909 whereby Muslims elected Muslim members of the various representative bodies) and to pleas for greater employment quotas

⁶ B.N. Pandey, *The Break-up of British India* (Macmillan, London, 1969). See also H.M. Seervai, *Partition of India: Legend and Reality* (Emmanem Publications, Bombay, 1989). See also Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985).

⁷ Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Ethno-nationalist Movement in India* (Viking, Penguin Press, New Delhi, 1996), p. 20.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 25–45.

⁹ Ibid., quoted on p. 56.

¹⁰ K.K. Aziz, *History of Partition of India*, vol. 1 (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1995), pp. 138–76.

for Muslims in the services. In 1930, at the annual session of the Muslim League at Allahabad, Sir Muhammad Iqbal put forth the idea of a separate Muslim state to be created in the Muslim-majority zone of north-west India. He based his argument on a novel 'two-nation theory', according to which India consisted of two separate and distinct nations—Hindus and Muslims. In his scheme, complete separation from the rest of India was not, however, an absolute requirement.¹¹

Nonetheless, it is important to note that although the top leaders of the Muslim League did not propagate the creation of a theocratic state, such an idea was not entirely foreign to some. For example, Raja Sahib Mahmudabad, one of the most trusted lieutenants of the Muslim League's leader, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, wrote a letter in 1939 to the historian Mohibul Hassan in which he said:

When we speak of democracy in Islam it is not democracy in the government but in the cultural and social aspects of life. Islam is totalitarian—there is no denying about it. It is the Koran that we should turn to. It is the dictatorship of the Koranic laws that we want—and that we will have—but not through non-violence and Gandhian truth.¹²

Jinnah, acclaimed by his followers as the Quaid-i-Azam (Great World Leader), excelled as a political strategist rather than as an ideologue. It is therefore problematic to attribute a consistent position to him on the type of Muslim state he wanted, although creating a theocratic state was foreign to his constitutional sensibilities. However, without his relentless eloquence Muslim nationalism and the demand for Muslim self-determination could not have been set forth so authoritatively.

The main Muslim ideologue of pathological nationalism was a mysterious figure, Chowdhary Rahmat Ali. Rahmat Ali enrolled as a student at Cambridge University in his mid-thirties. In 1933 he wrote a pamphlet 'Now or Never' in which he presented the idea of a separate Muslim state, Pakistan, to be created in northwestern India.¹³ He started lobbying conservative British politicians to support his various political schemes. The kernel of his litany was that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations with entirely irreconcilable worldviews, sense of history and destiny. Under no circumstance could they live together in peace in one country.¹⁴ Later, he began to advocate the creation of a pan-Islamic superstate. The greater Pakistan was to include Punjab, Afghanistan (consisting not only of the North West Frontier Province but also Afghanistan), Kashmir, Iran, Sindh (including Baluchistan), and Turkey (and other Turkish speaking areas of central Asia, once known as Turkestan).¹⁵ The word 'Pak' means pure or chaste in Urdu. Thus such a state suggested the creation of pure Muslims, pure Islam and a pure state. He also wanted several smaller Muslim states to be created in different parts of India, where Muslims, although in a minority within a larger Hindu-majority region, were nevertheless concentrated in pockets within them.¹⁶ It is intriguing to note that Rahmat Ali was despised and rejected by the Muslim League leaders who found his ideas unsophisticated and drastic. He was never welcomed into its fold and died a broken man in Cambridge in 1950.¹⁷

One should bear in mind that the Islamic clerics, the various *ulama*, were not major

¹¹ Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents, 1906–1947, Volume 2 (1924–1947)* (National Publishing House Ltd., Karachi, 1970), p. 159.

¹² Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation* (Hurst, London, 1997), pp. 57–8.

¹³ G. Allana (comp.), *Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents* (Islamic Book Service, Lahore, 1977), pp. 115–17.

¹⁴ Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1993), pp. 131–2. See also K.K. Aziz, *History of Partition of India*, vol. 2 (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1995), pp. 356–9.

¹⁵ See the original article of Chowdhary Rahmat Ali, 'Pakistan or Pastan—Destiny or Disintegration', published by INFORMATION TIMES (Internet): <http://www.InformationTimes.com>, 12 February 2001.

¹⁶ Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, pp. 233–4.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 175.

players at that time. The radical Sunni Deobandis (founded 1867) worked out an equation with Congress and joined the struggle for a united India.¹⁸ The future ideologue of Islamic fundamentalism or Islamism in Pakistan, Abul Ala Maududi (1903–79) rejected both the territorial-secular nationalism of the Congress and the ethno-cultural nationalism of the Muslim League. For him, an Islamic polity could only be based on faith.

The Sikh community, rooted essentially in Punjab, was nowhere in a majority. The main Sikh party, the Akali Dal, and other minor tendencies allied with the Congress in the latter's opposition to the Muslim League's demand for a separate Pakistan.

According to the 1941 census, the total population of India (including that of British India and the Indian princely states and agencies) was 383,643,745. It consisted of 206,117,326 caste Hindus, 48,813,180 scheduled castes (so-called untouchables) and 25,441,489 scheduled tribes Hindus; 92,058,096 Muslims; 5,691,477 Sikhs (concentrated in Punjab); and all the rest. As for British India, the total population was 294,171,961, comprising 150,890,146 caste Hindus; 39,920,807 scheduled castes and 4,165,097 scheduled tribes Hindus; 79,398,503 Muslims; 4,165,097 Sikhs; and other groups.¹⁹ Only about 10 per cent of the population of British India was enfranchised.

Partition and Preceding Events

After World War II, the British were in a hurry to leave India. The elections of winter 1945–46 were thus in point of fact about the future political shape of an independent subcontinent. Congress sought a mandate to keep India united, while the Muslim League stood for a separate Pakistan. Emotive and sensationalist slogans such as 'Pakistan Ka Naara Kaya? La Illaha Il Lillah (What is the Slogan of Pakistan? It is that there is no God but Allah)' and 'Muslim Hai to League Mein Aa' (if you are a Muslim then join the Muslim League) were raised. Hindus and Sikhs were demonised as infidels and exploiters. Muslims who opposed the Muslim League were portrayed as renegades to Islam. In some cases, fatwas (religious rulings) were issued to the effect that such persons should be denied a proper Islamic burial.²⁰ On the other hand, support was solicited from Sunnis, Shias, the Ahmadis, Muslim Communists and anyone who was registered in the census records as a Muslim. The election results vindicated the contradictory claims of both parties. Congress secured 905 general seats out of a total of 1,585 while the gains of the Muslim League were even more impressive. It won 440 seats out of a total of 495 reserved for Muslims. It is to be noted that Muslims in the Hindu-majority provinces also voted massively in favour of the Muslim League.²¹

The Cabinet Mission of 1946 sent by the post-war Labour Government of Clement Atlee failed to convince the two rival parties to agree upon a formula of power sharing within a united India. The factor that sealed the fate of unity was the eruption of large-scale communal violence following Jawaharlal Nehru's ill-considered press statement of 10 July 1946 in Bombay declaring that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly 'completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise'.²²

¹⁸ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan* (Progressive Books, Lahore, 1980).

¹⁹ Allana (comp.), *Pakistan Movement*, p. 259.

²⁰ Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation*, pp. 91–9; 103–20. See also G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (first published in 1949, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989), pp. 93–4. See also Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857–1948* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1978), pp. 196–206. See also Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana, the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Curzon, Richmond, 1996), pp. 133–5.

²¹ Ishtiaq Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia* (Pinter, London and New York, 1998), pp. 90–1.

²² Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1959), p. 155.

On 29 July 1946, Jinnah gave the call to direct action to Muslims to protest the alleged anti-minority attitude of Nehru. On 16 August 1946, communal massacres, initiated by hotheads despatched by the Muslim League chief minister of Bengal, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, took place in Calcutta, which left thousands of people, mostly Hindus, dead and homeless. The Hindus retaliated with great ferocity. More Muslims died in the counter-attack.²³ The Calcutta killings proved a contagion, and communal riots broke out in many parts of India. The real explosion, however, originated a few months later in the key Punjab province, where the Muslim (57.1 per cent), Hindu (27.8 per cent) and Sikh (13.2 per cent) groups maintained an uneasy peace until the beginning of 1947.²⁴ In the third week of January 1947, the Muslim League started its 'direct action' in Punjab against the non-Muslim League government of Khizr Hayat Tiwana.

On 3 March, the Sikh Akali Dal leader, Master Tara Singh, gave what in effect was a call for an all-out confrontation with Muslims.²⁵ It resulted in immediate clashes between Hindu-Sikh and Muslim demonstrators. The first large-scale, organised communal clashes took place in the Rawalpindi area. On the night of 6–7 March, Muslim gangs attacked a number of Sikh and Hindu villages, the campaign continuing until 13 March.²⁶ It left more than 2,000 mainly Sikh and Hindu men, women and children dead. Muslim League cadres were identified as the culprits behind it.

At that point, the Sikh leaders demanded that Punjab be also divided on communal lines if Pakistan was granted to the Muslims. On 6–8 March, the All-India National Congress Committee passed a resolution demanding the division of Punjab into two provinces so that 'the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part'.²⁷ Congress also demanded the partition of Bengal. The British Government announced the partitions of India, Bengal and Punjab on 3 June 1947. Congress, the Muslim League, representatives of the Sikhs and the various other minor religious and caste groups negotiated the actual demarcation of the Pakistan–India border before the Bengal and Punjab Boundary Commissions. These deliberations served as the basis for the Radcliffe Award of 17 August 1947 (Pakistan and India had already become independent on 14 and 15 August, respectively). The Radcliffe Award did not satisfy any of the major contestants, and has subsequently been criticised and even condemned by various disgruntled actors.²⁸

The riots and pogroms, which accompanied Partition, were most harrowing in the Punjab and effectively led to the first successful post-war experiment in massive ethnic cleansing in the world. At that critical moment Muslim League, the Sikh Akali Dal, RSS and Congress cadres became vicious killers.²⁹ However, some 30–35 million Muslims stayed on in other parts of India, while in East Pakistan some 23 per cent of the population continued to be Hindu. Some half million Hindus stayed behind in Sindh in West Pakistan (since December 1971 the only part which constitutes Pakistan).

²³ Sir Francis Tucker, *India's Partition and Human Debasement* (Akashdeep Publishing House, Delhi, 1988), Book I, pp. 156–65. See also Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (Ayon Books, New York, 1975), pp. 35–6.

²⁴ Allana (comp.), *Pakistan Movement*, p. 261.

²⁵ Ishtiaq Ahmed, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab: Arguments put forth before the Punjab Boundary Commission by the Parties Involved', in Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (eds), *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1999), p. 142.

²⁶ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 156–71. See also, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998). See also Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, p. 161.

²⁷ Satya M. Rai, *Legislative Politics and the Freedom Struggle in the Punjab 1897–1947* (India Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1984), p. 326.

²⁸ Ishtiaq Ahmed, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab', pp. 159–61.

²⁹ K.L. Tuteja, 'Hindu Consciousness, the Congress and Partition', in Amrik Singh (ed.), *The Partition in Retrospect* (Anamika Publishers in association with National Institute of Panjab Studies, New Delhi, 2000), pp. 23–4.

India

The failure to keep India united left the Congress ideal of a composite Indian nation in shambles. Millions of Hindu and Sikh refugees were devastated by that traumatic experience. Many objected to the Muslim presence and wanted Muslims driven away to Pakistan. At that critical moment, Gandhi, Nehru and many other stalwarts of the freedom struggle became a bulwark against the forces of reaction and revenge and, although attacks on Muslims continued for some time in many parts of India, they were small-scale occurrences.

When discussion began on the constitution, the notion of a modern individual-rights-oriented civic and composite nation prevailed. The Hindu ethno-nationalist lobby argued in favour of a Hindu cultural hegemony in terms of national identity, but was overruled. It can be asserted, however, that the trauma of Partition made everybody in the Congress High Command overly sensitive to the question of unity.³⁰

The Constitution and Education System

The high point of the Nehruvian model was the enshrinement of universal values and norms in the Indian Constitution, which came into force on 26 January 1950. Its declarations on human rights and freedoms were quite radical. Universal citizenship was granted. Public office was open to all citizens. Some 22 percent of jobs (i.e. roughly the ratio of those groups in the Hindu population) were later reserved by law for the so-called untouchable castes (who prefer to call themselves Dalits) and tribes. In 1955, the Untouchability (Offences) Act was passed. It criminalised the practice of untouchability. The constitution therefore clearly sanctioned a secular-democratic model of the polity.³¹ Although various amendments were subsequently made, the basic structure has remained unchanged.

The rational-modernising elite chose the educational system to foster gradually a democratic national identity. Liberal and Marxist scholars (many of Muslim origin) dominated prestigious Indian social science and humanities university faculties and institutes until recently. Their interpretation of the freedom movement was largely imbued with the emancipatory ethos of the European Enlightenment. Not surprisingly, the Hindu communal organisations and parties were very critical of such a foundation of Indian nationalism. The current BJP-led government seems to have decided to promote an educational agenda that will project a pro-Hindu bias in the production of knowledge and education. At the provincial level, such changes have already been introduced, typically identifying former Muslim rulers as responsible for all the ills of society.³²

Hindu Nationalism and the Growth of Hostility to Minorities

Congress had completely sidelined right-wing Hindu ethno-nationalists during the freedom struggle and alienated them from the state in the early years. Consequently, they had to devise strategies to advance the project of Hindutva from outside the state. The loss of life and property and expulsion from their ancestral homes left in Pakistan were blamed on the

³⁰ Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity*, p. 102.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 102–3; 107–8. See also, D.E. Smith, 'India as a Secular State', in Rajeev Bhargava, *Secularism and Its Critics* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999), pp. 222–30.

³² Harsh Kapoor, *South Asian Citizens' Wire*, Dispatch 1, 23 January, email: aiindex@mnet.fr; website: <http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex>

Congress's willingness to concede Partition. Muslims as a whole were held responsible for the vivisection of the motherland. Such propaganda did boost the fortunes of the right-wing parties somewhat. For example, in 1943 the total membership of the RSS was only 76,000. In 1948, it had soared to 600,000.³³ In electoral terms, however, such gains did not mean that a major challenge to Congress could be mounted. Rather, initially a major set back resulted from the involvement of the RSS in the assassination of Gandhi. The Hindu ethno-nationalists were infuriated over Gandhi's insistence that the Indian government pay 550 million rupees to Pakistan as compensation for losses incurred during Partition.³⁴ Accordingly, he began a fast unto death to put pressure on the government. On 31 January, Nathu Ram Godse, a member of the RSS, murdered Gandhi. Nehru decided to deal firmly with the Hindu ethno-nationalists. The RSS was banned, although it reappeared in 1952 in the form of Jana Sangha.

In the 1960s, some other avenues for a Hindu political revival were tried. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) was founded in 1964 ostensibly as a cultural movement purporting to inculcate pride among Hindus in their great culture and civilisation. Initially, the VHP identified the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries as a major threat. It is intriguing to note that the VHP movement was sustained with considerable assistance from the Hindu diaspora, especially the large Indian/Hindu population of North America consisting of successful professionals and other upwardly mobile groups. Support from the UK has also been significant.³⁵ The VHP and its various student and labour affiliates have been able to acquire political clout and infiltrate the state machinery and important cultural and media institutions.

However, the most significant boost to Hindu great nation chauvinism came initially from another quarter: the Congress government led by Mrs Indira Gandhi. In December 1971, India defeated Pakistan in the latter's eastern wing, where a rebellion had been going on since March of that year. In 1974, India exploded a nuclear device. Mrs Gandhi began to be hailed as a great stateswoman. Sycophants began to raise slogans such as 'India is Indira and Indira is India'. However, in 1974 popular strikes, demonstrations and agitations broke out in protest against price rises, unemployment and bad government. The government retaliated by suspending many of the normal parliamentary practices and civil liberties. The Hindu ethno-nationalists made capital out of the situation by joining the democratic opposition. On 5 April 1980, some of them came together and founded the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).³⁶

A shift in the Congress electoral strategy could also be noticed. Instead of relying upon its traditional supporters, the so-called vote-banks comprising the various social and religious minorities such as the Dalits and Muslims, Mrs Gandhi began to cultivate the more traditional upper caste voters. In the 1980s, the BJP, RSS and the rabidly anti-Muslim Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and several other such parties and organisations began to evolve a martial discourse based on the mythical Mahabharata Epic and other heroic tales with a view to instilling militancy and a sense of collective nationalism. The idea of Hindutva or Hindu nation, first propounded by Sarvarkar in the 1920s, was revived. It asserted that only Hindus were trustworthy and loyal citizens of India; and further, that Nehruvian secularism had

³³ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Ethno-national Movement in India*, p. 75.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 86–7.

³⁵ Eva Hellman, *Political Hinduism: The Challenge of the Visva Hindu Parisad* (Department of History of Religions, Uppsala, 1993).

³⁶ R.C. Frykenberg, 'Hindu Fundamentalism and the Structural Stability of India', in M.E. Marty and R.C. Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economics and Militance* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993), pp. 244–5.

been harmful to Hindus, while it pampered the minorities.³⁷ In particular, hostility was directed against the Muslims, who constitute some 13 per cent of the total Indian population.

It is important to note that the vast majority of Indian Muslims are converts from the poorest sections of Hindu society. They have been the main sufferers of the Partition Syndrome. They are grossly underrepresented in education and employment. Discrimination is therefore institutionalised in practice if not in theory. It is, however, their portrayal as a fifth column and therefore a security threat that makes them most vulnerable to hostile propaganda. Thus, even the liberal mass media gave sensational coverage to a report that some Dalits had converted to Islam in Tamil Nadu in 1981. Exaggerated reports of Arab money donated to Islamic organisations and the alleged rapid growth rate of the Muslim population also figured prominently in media discussions.³⁸

The galloping Hindu cultural revival struck terror among the minorities. Anti-Muslim attacks became larger, more frequent and more gruesome. The xenophobia and paranoia, which typifies such a pathological frame of mind, proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, Muslims did not mount the first challenge. It was the Sikhs of Punjab who were attracted to the idea of a separate Sikh state, Khalistan. The Khalistanis argued that Partition gave India to the Hindus and Pakistan to the Muslims, therefore Sikhs should be given Khalistan. The Khalistan conflict came to a head in June 1984, when Mrs Gandhi ordered the Indian army to flush out the Sikh leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his militants who had been occupying the holiest Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple at Amritsar since 1982. The military action was successful, but it cost a great deal in human lives. On 31 October 1984, Mrs Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards. Immediately, Hindu gangs began to hunt down Sikhs all over India. In the capital Delhi alone, at least 3,000 Sikhs were butchered.³⁹

The Sikhs had barely been crushed when another major separatist movement emerged in the predominantly Muslim-majority Indian-administered Kashmir. India and Pakistan had inherited the Kashmir dispute at the time of Partition. Its resurgence proved even more difficult for India to bring under control. The Kashmir conflict continues to claim lives almost every day and India has not been able to bring the situation under control despite extreme repression and the deployment of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and security forces.⁴⁰ India's worries have been compounded further by the re-emergence of separatist insurgency among a number of different Christian tribal peoples in the smaller north-eastern border states (provinces of India). The Indian government and mass media have been alleging that the Pakistani secret services, especially the Inter-Services-Intelligence (ISI) help the Sikh, Kashmiri and other separatist movements in India with training, arms and other facilities.⁴¹ From time to time some Indian Muslim is arrested on charges of working for the ISI. This undoubtedly helps portray all Muslims as pro-Pakistan and a subversive factor in Indian society.

³⁷ D. Gupta, 'Communalism and Fundamentalism: Some Notes on the Nature of Ethnic Politics in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 6, nos. 11 and 12, 1991. See also, Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Secularism in India—Theory and Practice', in Asghar Ali Engineer and Uday Mehta (eds), *State Secularism and Religion: Western and Indian Experiences* (Ajanta Books International, Delhi, 1998), p. 197.

³⁸ Mizan Khan with Ted Robert Gurr, 'Muslims in India and the Rise of Hindu Communalism', in Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, 2000), pp. 266–72. See also George Mathew, 'Politicisation of Religion: Conversions to Islam in Tamil Nadu', in Moin Shakir (ed.), *Religion, State and Politics in India* (Ajanta Books International, Delhi, 1989), pp. 271–306.

³⁹ Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity*, pp. 113–62.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 137–62. See also, Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (I.B. Tauris, London, 2000).

⁴¹ Manoj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties* (Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1999), pp. 163–206.

While the anti-minority policies of the Hindu right have been steadily growing, a major worry for the BJP, which seeks power through the electoral process, has been the alienation of a significant number of Dalits and the so-called Other Backward Castes (OBCs), a rather large segment of peasant and other castes, which occupy a position between the upper castes and Dalits. The BJP had been seeking ways and means of enveloping such social strata into its fold of Hindu cultural nationalism. An emotive cause or symbol was found in the long, drawn-out dispute between Hindus and Muslims over the site of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. It was alleged that the god Rama had been born there, and a temple existed on that spot before the mosque was built in 1528. Consequently, in the 1980s, the BJP, VHP and other communal entities launched a campaign to dismantle the mosque. The Bajrang Dal (established in 1984), a youth wing of the VHP, employed mainly for agitation purposes and demonstrations, played the leading role in mobilising mass action and other activities in favour of the campaign.⁴² In early December 1992, the BJP and its supporters the VHP, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena and other fanatical groups finally arrived in Ayodhya after a long countrywide march in which thousands of people joined, including OBCs and other traditionally alienated sections of Hindu society. The mob easily overpowered the rather small police force, climbed onto the top of the mosque and demolished it in a few hours.

The Congress government under Narashima Rao seemed to have let the event take place mainly for opportunistic electoral reasons. The demolition of the mosque was accompanied by mob attacks on Muslims all over India and several thousand were killed. Suddenly, India was in the midst of perhaps the most serious communal conflict since Partition. There was a fierce reaction in Pakistan and the old temples in Punjab were razed and some Hindus were also killed. The Hindu ethno-nationalists have plans to destroy some 3,000 other mosques built allegedly on Hindu temples and holy places.⁴³ Building the Ram Mandir is part of the BJP's election manifesto. The BJP has subsequently been increasing its electoral support and is currently the biggest party in a coalition government of 25 parties. Thus far, it lacks parliamentary support for realising such a project. In fact moderate sections of the BJP have been trying to woo the Muslim vote bank and have made some gains. However, a close ally of the BJP, the Shiv Sena leader, Bal Thackeray, has recently demanded that Muslims should be disenfranchised.⁴⁴

The 20 million-strong Christian community had most of the time escaped the type of animosity faced by Muslims, since they had played no role in bringing about the division of India. Some conversions to Christianity had continued to take place, mainly among the aborigines. Attacks upon churches and mission-run schools had been taking place, but after Sonia Gandhi (Italian-Catholic by birth) became the leader of the Congress Party in the late 1990s, the Hindu Right has been peddling a Christian conspiracy to annexe India. The last couple of years have witnessed a dramatic increase in church burning, killing of Christians and a countrywide campaign against missionaries. Thus on the night of 22/23 January 1999, the Australian missionary Graham Stuart Staines and his two sons were burnt alive in Monouharpur in Orissa.⁴⁵ Finally, the most enduring cleavages in Hindu society remain as deep as before: those between the twice-born upper castes, the assertive OBC groups and the Dalits. Attacks against Dalits continue to take place frequently all over India.

⁴² Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Ethno-national Movement in India*, pp. 450–81.

⁴³ Sarvepalli Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri-Masjid-Ram Janmabhumi Issue* (Viking, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1991), p. viii.

⁴⁴ *Hindustan Times* (Internet Edition), 19 December 2000.

⁴⁵ Shamsul (e-mail message), *Urgent Press Statement*, of 23 January 2001 issued by Dr Richard Howell, General Secretary, Evangelical Fellowship of India and John Dayal, Secretary General, All India Christian Council, and, National Vice President of the All India Catholic Union, shamsul [shamsul@bol.net.in]

Pakistan

A notorious ambiguity about the purposes for which Pakistan was created—was it to be simply a national state of Muslims or a theocratic Islamic state based on Sharia (dogmatic Islamic law)?—characterises its travails with national identity. Jinnah had never provided any clear answer to this question. Pakistan can therefore be described as an unimagined nation. The elite that came to power in Pakistan lacked political vision and preparedness. It did not allow democracy to be institutionalised. Recurrent military-bureaucratic take-overs and a host of bizarre decisions contributed to the fostering of a pathological political culture at all levels of state and society. Such a tendency was aggravated by the traumatic loss of East Pakistan in late 1971 through a popular local rebellion backed by an Indian military intervention.

The Constitutional and Legal Structure

However, the first authoritative statement made on 11 August 1947, that is only three days before independence, in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly by Jinnah deviated from the main thrust of the Muslim League's propaganda in favour of cultural nationalism. To the utter surprise of many, he made the following observation in a long address:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State ... I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in due course Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.⁴⁶

This patently secular and territorial idea of nation contradicted the rationale for the creation of Pakistan as a state for a cultural nation. The controversy that it caused has been generating ever more confusion as time goes by. While the fundamentalists usually dismiss it as irrelevant and an aberration, mainstream Muslim modernists argue that he was actually operating within an ideal Islamic framework of tolerance and justice for non-Muslims within an Islamic state.⁴⁷ Marginalised secularists, leftists and oppressed minorities, however, raise it to the level of a sacred covenant that his successors have allegedly broken.

It seems that Jinnah's wording reflected his usual political sagacity rather than a firm ideological position. Communal violence was at its worst at that time. The Radcliffe Award was about to be announced, and one could guess that it would result in population movement on a gigantic scale. The speech probably purported to discourage mass migration, uprooting and further communal violence. However, it is doubtful whether in the wake of the communal riots such a prescription enjoyed any real credibility in Muslim-Pakistani society, Jinnah's prestige and authority notwithstanding. In this regard, it is significant to bear in mind that Jinnah never again reiterated such a commitment, although he lived for another year. After his death on 11 September 1948, the idea of a secular state never again received much attention in mainstream Pakistani politics. Rather, Islamic idiom became a central feature of official rhetoric.

One can even argue that once the initial euphoria was over, and a framework for national identity and nation building had to be found, the Pakistani leadership felt constrained to distinguish itself from India. There were undoubtedly other issues to be dealt

⁴⁶ *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, vol. II (Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1976), pp. 403–4.

⁴⁷ Dr. Nasim Hasan Shah, 'The Myth of Jinnah's belief in Secularism', in *Dawn* (Internet Edition), 14 August, 1998.

with by the government of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan (d. 1951) but maintaining distinctiveness from Congress and secular India must have been an important consideration. Thus the Objectives Resolution moved in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly by Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan on 7 March 1949 proclaimed the novel idea that sovereignty over the entire universe belonged to God. Democracy was to be practised, but within 'Islamic limits'. The minorities were assured that their legitimate interests would be safeguarded, and that provisions would be made for them in accordance with Islam freely to profess and practise their religions and cultures.⁴⁸ Although such proclamations sounded like innocuous 'boasts', in the longer run they proved to be constraints that facilitated the politics of exclusion of different religious minorities and deviant sects from the category of nation.

Thus the first constitution of Pakistan adopted in 1956 contained a commitment to bringing all laws into conformity with Islam. In 1973, the third constitution was adopted. Unlike the first two constitutions that only required the president of the republic to be a Muslim, the third also required the prime minister to be a Muslim. It further obliged them to take an oath testifying their belief in the finality of Prophet Muhammad's mission.⁴⁹

The Educational System

The invention of a distinct historical past for the so-called Muslim nation of India justifying its separate existence within the boundaries of Pakistan has been felt to be necessary for conferring legitimacy and authenticity on it. Attempts to imagine such a nation have unsurprisingly resulted in distortion and exaggeration of facts on a massive scale, resulting in mythogenesis.

The main concern has been to foster a Pakistani-Islamic identity defined negatively, as a contrast to India. In his book *The Murder of History*, Prof. K.K. Aziz has scrutinised 66 textbooks used for teaching history, Pakistan studies and social studies in Pakistani schools, colleges and universities. Pakistan studies deal largely with the Muslim nationalist/separatist movement. It is a compulsory subject from 1st grade up to university, and not only all students of humanities and social sciences but also scientists, doctors and engineers must gain a pass.

The author alleges that Islamisation by the government of General Zia-ul-Haq vitiated the general academic environment in Pakistan. He cites extensively factual errors, logical fallacies, inconsistencies, falsifications, mythologisations and crass propaganda from books used both in the Urdu and English-medium schools and colleges. The military and the long military rules are presented in positive terms while hostility towards India, Hinduism and Hindus is their hallmark. For example, Congress is described as a Hindu party. That there were many Muslims among its members, and that some held leading positions is not reported. India is described as the state of Hindus, although there are as many Muslims or more living in India as in Pakistan.⁵⁰

Furthermore, a grossly exaggerated role is assigned to Muslims in the anti-colonial struggle. The Muslim League is declared as the party of the Muslim masses that successfully resisted both British colonialism and Hindu domination. Only Muslims are mentioned as victims of the partition riots and massacres, which are alleged to have been begun by Hindus and Sikhs. Any comment on the loss of lives among Hindus and Sikhs

⁴⁸ Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Concept of an Islamic State: An Analysis of the Ideological Controversy in Pakistan* (Frances Pinter, London, 1987), pp. 218–19.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 219–21.

⁵⁰ K.K. Aziz, *The Murder of History* (Vanguard, Lahore, 1993), pp. 193–5.

during that period is conspicuous by its absence. He sums up this approach in the following words:

It is declared that the Muslims of India made 'tremendous' sacrifices to win their freedom. The fact is that, apart from the brief years of 1858–60 and 1920–22, Muslims suffered little hardship between 1857–1947. It is forgotten by everyone that the Muslim League's search for protection and safeguards (in the early years) and its struggle for an independent state (in the later years) were strictly constitutional efforts, peaceful campaigns and political fights, conducted through parliamentary debates and negotiations ... No Muslim League leaders languished in prisons. No Muslim masses faced British bullets. The many people who died or suffered horribly in 1947 were running away from their homes because their life was in danger, not because they were fighting for the creation of Pakistan. They were casualties of communal riots, not of anti-British warfare.⁵¹

He comments further, 'A sane educational system does not train students in hate. Whatever the justification for it or the compulsions of patriotism, hatred corrupts the mind, more so if it is still tender, and retards its healthy growth.'⁵²

Islamisation, Confessionalism and Hostility to Minorities

States founded on religious and ethnic nationalism invariably discriminate against atypical minorities. Ethnocracies can be a more apt description of such states, even when they practice democracy. Israel is a case in point. However, Pakistan has the rather unenviable distinction of extending the logic of confessionalism to its ultimate limits. In Pakistan, not only non-Muslims but also deviant sects within the broader category of Muslims who were mobilised in support of the 1945–46 elections have been alienated over time. Also, women as a whole have been victims of the so-called Islamisation process.

In 1953, violent anti-Ahmadiyya riots took place in Punjab in which several hundred lives were lost and considerable Ahmadiyya property was destroyed. The masterminds behind those riots were politicians from the ruling Muslim League seeking to challenge the ruling faction within the party.⁵³ In 1974, the Islamic socialist Zulfikar Ali Bhutto played the anti-Ahmadiyya card again in the hope of extending his populist constituency into the stronghold of the doctrinal-minded Islamic parties of Pakistan. Consequently, when General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq seized the reigns of power in July 1977 by toppling Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a bloodless coup, a long tradition of relying on Islam to define national identity and the rights of citizens was already in place.

Upon coming to power in 1977, General Zia announced an ambitious programme to Islamise Pakistan. He expressed his political philosophy in a succinct manner: 'I have a mission, given by God, to bring Islamic order to Pakistan.'⁵⁴ His main source of inspiration for an Islamic order was the ideas of the arch fundamentalist Abul Ala Maududi. The latter had set up headquarters in Lahore after Partition, from where he had been propagating his idea of a totalitarian Islamic state. The pre-Partition tradition of exploiting Islamic slogans to rouse Muslim fears against Hindus had been converted by Pakistani politicians into a Machiavellian art that involved damning their opponents as renegades to Islam and enemies of Pakistan. The various governments used it to slur the opposition's call for democracy and elections, while the various fundamentalist parties and factions pushed all governments into a corner with allegations of insincerity in their commitment to Islam. An Islamist political

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 197.

⁵² Ibid., p. 195.

⁵³ Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953 (Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1954), pp. 261–86.

⁵⁴ Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan* (Kegan Paul, London, 1988), p. 141.

discourse evolved incrementally, each addition supplanting modernistic vagaries with puritanical certainty. It bore the hallmarks of Maududism.

Thus, in 1979, the government announced the imposition of the Hudud Ordinance, i.e. traditional Islamic punishments for the offences of adultery, false accusation of adultery, drinking alcohol, theft and highway robbery. In 1984, a new Law of Evidence was adopted, which reduced the worth of the evidence given by a female witness in a court of law to half the value of that given by a male witness. It was also a period when Islamic scholars notorious for their misogynist views appeared on television to advocate strict segregation between men and women and the confinement of the latter to the private sphere. In subsequent years, the incidence of 'honour killings' has increased sharply. The victims are wives and daughters killed by their own families for allegedly defiling the family honour by demanding divorce or refusing to marry a man chosen for them by their elders. The courts have generally been very lenient to the culprits.⁵⁵

Also in 1984, many new restrictions were imposed on the Ahmadiyya group. They were prohibited from using Islamic nomenclature in their religious and social activities and may no longer call their places of worship mosques. In 1985, separate electorates were reintroduced (they were abolished in 1956), whereby non-Muslims were to constitute a separate body of voters, being thus entitled only to elect non-Muslim legislators to the various assemblies. Consequently, their right to take part in normal law-making is severely restricted. It was followed by the adoption of the Blasphemy Law in 1986. It reads as follows:

Use of derogatory remarks etc. in respect of the Holy Prophet: Whether by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punishable with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall be liable to fine.⁵⁶

General Zia died in a plane crash in August 1988. The elected governments of Benazir Bhutto (1988–90, 1994–96) and Nawaz Sharif (1990–93; 1997–99) did not dare question the validity of the laws passed during the time of General Zia. It seems that, once a law has been adopted in the name of Islam, no politician is willing to attempt to rescind it. In October 1997, retired Lahore High Court judge Arif Iqbal Bhatti was shot down by unidentified members of extremist religious groups. His death was believed to be linked to his role in the acquittal in 1995 of two Christians, Salamat Masih and Rehman Masih, charged with blasphemy.⁵⁷ The Pakistan Human Rights Commission has been providing details of the increasing terrorisation of minorities. Charges of blasphemy have been framed against many Ahmadis and Christians. Forced conversions of Hindus have also been reported.⁵⁸ The military government of General Pervez Musharraf, which came to power through a *coup d'état* on 12 October 1999, initially presented a progressive position on Islam, but it had quickly to withdraw from such a position under pressure from the extremists.

Shia-Sunni Terrorism and the Emergence of the Jihadis

During Gen. Zia's regime, Sunni-Shia doctrinal differences erupted into open conflict. The difficulties were compounded further when in the late 1980s powerful external actors began

⁵⁵ Mannens heder, kvinnans död (The Honour of Man but the Death of a Woman), Swedish Television channel 2, 21 May 2000. See also, the Murder of Samia Sarwar: <http://saxakali.com/southasia/honor.htm>: 3–5.

⁵⁶ Ian Talbot, *Pakistan. A Modern History* (Hurst, London, 1998), p. 282.

⁵⁷ *State of Human Rights in 1998* (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Lahore, 1999), pp. 54–5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

to cultivate their lobbies in Pakistan. Thus Saudi Arabia and Iran were believed to be sending large sums of money, books, leaflets, audio and video cassette-tapes and other propaganda material to Pakistan. Such propaganda offensives were backed by the inflow of firearms and other weapons. Sunni and Shia militias began to menace and terrorise society; the assassinations of several rival Sunni and Shia *ulama* and regular gun battles and bomb explosions have been taking place in Pakistan in recent years.⁵⁹

An international Islamic guerrilla movement comprising Sunni militants, aptly described as Jihadis (holy warriors), has been establishing its headquarters in the northern Pakistani city of Peshawar in recent years. The Jihadis have declared war on India and want to liberate Kashmir through violent means. The United States is another enemy, as are Israel, secular Turkey and the central Asian republics. In some pronouncements, all non-Muslims have been declared enemies of Islam.⁶⁰ The coming into power of the arch-fundamentalist Talebans in neighbouring Afghanistan has once again revived the old pan-Islamic project of Chowdhary Rahmat Ali. In a recent interview, a leading American South-Asia expert Selig Harrison claimed that General Zia's involvement in Afghanistan was meant to promote a pan-Islamic superstate in the region. He also alleged that such a scheme has powerful backers in the Pakistani military establishment.⁶¹ It can be assumed that Iran (because of its deviant Shia Islam), Turkey (secular) and the central Asian republics (also secular) will have no interest in such a project. Instead what is more likely is that the totalitarian, obscurantist, anti-modernist, medieval type of state and society created in Afghanistan could envelope Pakistan.

Separatist Movements

Although the Muslim League was successful in presenting a broad Muslim unity against Congress, after Partition it quickly dissipated, and the centre became a stronghold of mainly Punjabi-Urdu-speaking groups. Recently, the equation has been changed, and it is a Punjabi-Pukhtun ruling axis which dominates Pakistan. Separatist movements have emerged several times. The Pukhtun nationalists seeking to create a separate Pukhtunistan in the north-western province of Pakistan were contained by a policy of carrot and stick during the 1950s and 1960s. The people of the former East Pakistan seceded to form their independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. It cost, however, between 1.5 and 3 million lives.⁶² The Pakistan army especially targeted the Hindus. A bloody guerrilla war raged in Baluchistan during the early 1970s, which was defeated by forceful military action. However, a virulent ethnic conflict that has claimed several thousand lives has been going on in the Sindh province, mainly as a confrontation between the native Sindhi-speakers and the Urdu-speaking refugees (both primarily Sunni Muslims) who settled in the urban areas of that province after Partition. Military action has been undertaken several times to restore law and order. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees have

⁵⁹ Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity*, pp. 7–8.

⁶⁰ Robin Wright, 'The Chilling Goal of Islam's New Warriors Religion: In Pakistan, Today's Militant Faithful See the Entire World as the Battlefield for Their Holy War', *Los Angeles Times*, Thursday, 28 December 2000, in Harsh Kapoor, *South Asian Citizens' Wire*, Dispatch 2, 2 January, e-mail: aiindex@mnet.fr; website: <http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex>. See also Hassan Gardezi, 'The Islamist and Hindutva Politics: Identities of Outlook and Objectives', in Harsh Kapoor, *South Asian Citizens' Wire*, 25 December 2000, e-mail: aiindex@mnet.fr; website: <http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex>.

⁶¹ Maqbool Aliani sent an e-mail on 8 March 2001, which included an interview with Selig Harrison entitled, 'CIA Worked in Tandem with Pak to Create Taliban', published in *Times of India* (Internet edition), <http://www.timesofindia.com/today/07euro1.htm>.

⁶² Case Study—Genocide in Bangladesh, http://www.gendercide.org/case_bangladesh.html.

settled in Karachi, where armed militias run lucrative businesses in drugs and arms smuggling.⁶³

The India–Pakistan Interaction

Everyday at dusk, animosity between India and Pakistan is elaborately, ostentatiously and with unmistakable pathological overtones manifested during the flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagah-Attari Border, situated between Lahore on the Pakistani side and Amritsar on the Indian side. Before Partition, some people daily travelled by the early bus or train from either of these cities, did their job or business in the other, and returned. The distance between them is some 30 miles. Now, the soldiers symbolically seal the border by ramming the iron gates with a fierce bang to indicate that an impassable barrier exists between the two countries and their peoples. There are usually large crowds on both sides who watch this awe-inspiring spectacle. They add zest to the ceremony by nervous clapping and other gesticulations. Despite being neighbours who share a thousand miles or more of common border, the same languages and cultural patterns, the people on both sides hardly ever meet. Getting permission to visit the other country is almost impossible for most people. Moreover, trade between India and Pakistan is negligible.

Both states have been raising their defence expenditures over time. Although China should worry the Indian defence planners more than Pakistan, most of India's actual armed encounters and wars have taken place with the latter. Pakistan's defence planning has always been based on the assumption that the main threat to its security comes from India. During 1948, India and Pakistan fought an undeclared small-scale war in Kashmir. A United Nations-based cease-fire came into operation in January 1949. A line of control constitutes an unrecognised border between them. There is enough evidence to suggest that India did not give Pakistan its proper share of the common military assets inherited from the colonial state and generally adopted an unfriendly posture towards the latter, exacerbating its sense of weakness and vulnerability *vis-à-vis* the bigger and more powerful neighbour.⁶⁴

Pakistan began already in 1948 to seek closer relations with the West, while India adopted a neutralist foreign policy posture. In the 1950s, India became an important player in the non-aligned movement, while Pakistan sought membership in the Western defence pacts of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation and Central Treaty Organisation. India cultivated closer ties with the Soviet Union in the 1960s; Pakistan reached an accommodation with the People's Republic of China during the same period. In 1962, China inflicted a humiliating defeat on India in a border conflagration. India requested American military intervention, but was provided arms instead. Britain and France also rushed arms to India. The West in general increased its military and economic aid.⁶⁵

During September 1965, India and Pakistan fought a major border war for 17 days over Kashmir. In December 1971, India and Pakistan fought their third war, when the Indian army intervened in behalf of the East Pakistani Bengalis fighting the Pakistani army. It resulted in a crushing military defeat for Pakistan and the loss of East Pakistan, which became the independent state of Bangladesh. In 1974, India exploded a nuclear device. In Pakistan, Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto vowed that Pakistanis would acquire their own bomb even if it meant eating grass. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, both states spent huge

⁶³ Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity*, pp. 169–216.

⁶⁴ Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2000), pp. 4–32.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 60–1.

sums of money to brace their military capabilities. Both sides have provided military training and bases to secessionists.

On 11 and 13 May 1998, India detonated altogether five nuclear devices. Pakistan followed suit a few days later with its own series of six test explosions on 28 and 30 May. The most alarming aspect of this hostility is that large numbers of people on both sides were jubilant when their governments conducted the tests. Since then, the governments in the two countries have vastly expanded their expenditure on armaments, intensified cross-border terrorism, and connived, some would say, patronised the ultra-nationalist extremists parties and movements in their own societies. In addition, they have fought a limited war at prohibitive heights in the Kargil region of Kashmir in May 1999, which many feared could end in a nuclear confrontation.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The main concern of this study has been the elaboration of a pathological socio-political system. My thesis has been that in the formation of such a system the Partition of India has played the primary or pivotal role. A socio-political system is not something that can simply be contrived at will by ethnic activists or political entrepreneurs. Nor is it intrinsic to human nature to exercise ethnic preference for one's own group in the form of aggression against others. Rather individuals and social groups are embedded in historically determined circumstances that circumscribe their choices. In circumstances where uncertainty, anxiety and fear prevail—as when the colonial system terminated in India and power had to be handed over to the indigenous leaders, and the various groups could not agree on how to share it—upheavals such as Partition aggravate those original fears and anxieties. However, such situations become endemic if the original problems persist and no dramatic transformation takes place. In such circumstances, ethnic activists continue to appeal to the sense of insecurity of their group and political entrepreneurs make use of such a constituency in their power games. A vicious circle comes into being and is produced and re-produced over time.

It is not difficult to conclude that the Ghost of Partition stalks South Asia, haunting the minds and souls of many of its people. Its ideological fallout benefited right wing forces in both India and Pakistan. It bequeathed a negative, aggressive and violent mode of thinking, behaving and realising a political objective. It also conferred, in a perverted sense, legitimacy on the ethnic or cultural model of nationalism, which currently pervades politics in both states. Driven to the extreme, it would mean the creation of ethnically 'homogeneous' India and Pakistan in some bizarre sense and, consequently, a balkanisation of these states and/or genocide of unwanted minorities.

However, at the time of Partition, even drastic measures of ethnic cleansing did not result in the complete elimination of diversity. Unwanted ethnic individuals and groups survived in both societies. Especially, India inherited large non-Hindu minorities and therefore a bigger problem of consolidating a cohesive and coherent nation. The western wing of Pakistan inherited minuscule religious minorities, but since its foundations were immanently confessional, not only were these minorities adversely affected but also sects considered deviant from 'true' Islam have also been on the receiving end of doctrinal fastidiousness. Overall, rejection of pluralism and diversity—the leitmotif of the Partition Syndrome—has been demonstrating increasingly pathological tendencies with the passing years. It has become the implicit or explicit reference for the subsequent anti-minority politics in the two countries. Ethnic activists were to be found on both sides before the actual division of India, but previously they were marginal to politics. After Partition they

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 375–94.

began to gain influence and support on the levers of state power—quite early in Pakistan but in India from the 1990s onwards.

Although one can reasonably argue that the founding fathers of modern India tried to institutionalise a universal, civic type of citizenship and a concomitant ideal of a composite nation, Indian secularism has been under considerable pressure from those forces that see Muslims and Pakistan as threats to Indian safety and national consolidation. Hindu fears of a non-Hindu conspiracy to subvert their culture and existence now include not only Muslims but also Christians and Sikhs. Thus, not in constitutional terms but in actual behaviour, the state has been exploiting the communal card in its politics, especially during elections. The BJP has actually come to power by exploiting such a theme. In the long run, constitutional guarantees may not suffice to protect the secular, democratic character of the state.

In the case of Pakistan, hostility to minorities is no longer confined to the conventional Muslim/non-Muslim divide. Rather the perennial concern of Pakistan to distinguish itself from secular India has meant investing considerable time, energy and prestige in constructing a Muslim identity for itself. Islamic can easily be substituted for Muslim, since in the Islamic heritage the two have been understood as inextricable and indeed interchangeable. Consequently, the constitutions were based on Islamic principles, and a commitment to Islamise all existing laws unavoidably involved a search for an answer to the question: what is true Islam and who is a true Muslim? Given the legacy of bitter doctrinal and theological disputes present in the Islamic heritage, the logic of such a line of enquiry ultimately exposed the divisions amongst the various Muslim sects. Politicians more often than not found such divisions useful for scoring political points and governments for legitimating their rule. The exclusion and marginalisation of groups found holding beliefs contrary to strict orthodox standards has been the net result of such politics. The purgatorial thrust of ethnicised (sectarian, to be more correct) politics has inevitably enveloped women, since traditional Muslim society was always segregated on a gender basis.

Thus, in contrast to the Indian state, which still offers constitutional and legal resistance to pathological politics, the Pakistani state has itself been the initiator of various types of discriminatory and exclusionary policies. That extremist parties do not secure an electoral majority should not be surprising because the state bases itself on a fundamentalist ideology, which is less extreme than the most rabid Jihadi groups. On the other hand, the Indian state continues to be grounded on liberal-secular values, but politicians in increasing measure deviate from such ideals in the interest of realpolitik. The Hindu ethno-nationalists, however, have begun to question it increasingly.

One can even assert that the domestic politics of one country have been affected by the domestic politics of the other. Thus the politics of action–reaction have been gaining cumulative menacing affect. For example, Hindu ethno-nationalists have pointed out that Pakistan maintains discriminatory policies towards non-Muslims, including the Hindus, so in recent years they have questioned why India should not follow suit and disenfranchise Muslims. In Pakistan, a reaction to the attack on the Babri mosque in Ayodhya was immediately followed by attacks on the old Hindu temples. In an ideological sense, the extremism of the Hindu ethno-nationalists and Chowdhary Rahmat Ali has been vindicated. The self-fulfilling prophecy of the forces of fear, hate and aggression has been confirmed at least five times (bloody division in 1947, wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971 and the nuclear blasts of 1998) in just over fifty years: that those on the Other Side are inveterate enemies who pose a lethal threat to the identity and survival of those on This Side and therefore have to be crushed before it is too late. At the bottom of the hectic and escalating efforts of the two states to acquire the capacity to hit first and hit hard is the fundamental problem of security. The security syndrome classically drives enemy states to spend more on acquiring

more and better arms. Each such step results in a reaction from the other side. As a consequence, instead of security being enhanced insecurity is accentuated.

How far the ruling elites and the hawks in the two establishments will pursue confrontational politics is difficult to say. It is possible that in the long run both sides may be fatigued by the high cost of such an undertaking, or one of them gives up such a path, realising that it cannot win the competition. A clear and strong message from the Security Council of the United Nations and major states outside it to India and Pakistan to abandon the path of conflict may also help. However, the chances that the paradigm of pathological politics will be abandoned because both or one side comes to a rational calculation that it is no longer efficacious seem remote at the moment.

The leadership in both countries seems to believe that they can defy the major powers of the world, since both states possess nuclear weapons capability. There is also a belief that because both sides are armed with such weapons, no major war can take place between them. It has been noted that small-scale military showdowns along the Line of Control in Kashmir have increased, maybe as an alternative to major confrontation. It is quite possible that a nuclear war will break out in the region, perhaps accidentally. If some people survive the massive devastation it is likely to inflict, perhaps then an atmosphere conducive to building a lasting peace may finally emerge. Western Europe could extricate itself from the grip of pathological politics only after two world wars and the holocaust had demonstrated the utter futility of pursuing ethno-nationalism, colonialism and racism. Perhaps societies do not learn to forgo a pathological socio-political paradigm unless they are forced to pay a heavy price in blood for their lack of foresight. Alternative paradigms offering a peaceful way out of the current predicament do not seem to be gaining support of the two establishments, although a vigorous peace movement has been evolving between Indian and Pakistani intellectuals in the region and in the diaspora. The world community seems content with giving conventional calls from time to time for restraint and dialogue. Perhaps a process of forgiveness for the crimes committed during Partition initiated by intellectuals from both sides can miraculously lead to reconciliation and mutual acceptance.